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ABSTRACT

"Communique" is the "official newsletter of the National Association of School Psychologists" (NASP). This "Special Edition" of "Communique" is a compilation of previously published articles all of which bear on information frequently requested by families. NASP is dedicated to building partnerships between schools and families to improve the education and mental health of the nation's children. When families and schools work together, children thrive. In this special issue, NASP provides families with practical, concrete suggestions to help make school a positive experience. As a resource for use in relationships with children and schools, NASP provides these materials in order to help parents work together with school psychologists and teachers toward a common goal--promoting healthy, successful children. This issue includes the following articles: (1) "Retention and Promotion" (Andrea Canter and Karen Carey) (2) "Parenting with Love and Logic" and "Parenting Teens with Love and Logic" (book review; Beth Berghoff and Paul Berghoff) (3) "Effective Parenting: Positive Support for Families" (The National Association of School Psychologists); (4) "Section 504" (Michael Perla); (5) "Computers and Children" (William Pfohl and Shawna Ferstl); (6) "Online Advertising and Children" (Victoria Stanhope); (7) "School Phobia/School Avoidance/School Refusal" (Leslie Z. Paige); (8) "Study Skills" (Virginia Smith Harvey); (9) "School Entry Decisions" (Paula Laidig); (10) "Lead Poisoning in Young Children" (Julie McNamara, Thuy Lindsey, and Judy Singer). (MKA)

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Communiqué

National Association of School Psychologists — Summer 1998 *Special Edition*

SPECIAL EDITION
INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Will my child learn more if held back a year? How do I know if my child is ready for Kindergarten? What can I do if my child refuses to go to school? Every year, parents are faced with these common as well as challenging situations with their school-age children. The National Association of School Psychologists and its over 20,000 members are dedicated to building partnerships between schools and families to improve the education and mental health of our nation's children. When families and schools work together, children thrive. In this special issue, NASP provides families with practical, concrete suggestions to help make school a positive experience. As a resource to use in your own relationships with your children and schools, NASP hopes these materials will help parents work together with school psychologists and teachers toward a common goal — healthy, successful children. ♦

— Dorothy Daugherty, NASP Staff and Andrea Canter, Editor

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Retention and Promotion
A Handout for Parents

by Andrea Canter, Ph.D., NCSP, Minneapolis Schools and Karen Carey, Ph.D., California State University/Fresno

Background

Every year, many children are held back in the same grade. Teachers and administrators might recommend retention (or nonpromotion) when children have difficulty keeping up with their classmates in academic subjects or fail to master grade-level "standards" in district or state-wide testing. Retention might be recommended because children are smaller than classmates, appear "immature" or have later birthdays and seem to need a chance to grow. And, retention is sometimes recommended to help children who have missed a lot of school due to illness or frequent moves, or who are just beginning to learn English. Although in some school districts, retention is used frequently, especially with kindergarten and first grade children, the practice is very controversial among educators and researchers. Some note that research does not support the notion that retention helps children to "catch up", while others note that "social promotion" — sending children on to the next grade regardless of performance — merely pushes children through the school system without requiring mastery of basic skills.

What Does the Research Say?

Retention has been studied for many years, and the results of most studies consistently show that:

- Most children do not "catch up" when they are held back. Although some retained children do better at first, they often fall behind again in later grades, and are often referred for remedial help or special education during elementary school.

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Book Review

Parenting with Love & Logic

by Foster W. Cline & Jim Fay (Pinon Press, 1990)

Parenting Teens with Love & Logic

by Foster W. Cline & Jim Fay (Pinon Press, 1992)

Reviewed by Beth Berghoff, NCSP & Paul Berghoff

Parenting with Love & Logic and *Parenting Teens with Love & Logic* both show parents how to teach their children to make good decisions for everyday situations encountered in school, with peers and at home. Parents are taught methods for helping children become responsible individuals while avoiding power struggles. Parents are shown, often through the use of anecdotes, ways to structure the situation so that their children find solutions to problem situations rather than having the parent do all the thinking and problem solving. Typical problems such as bedtime, homework, chores, curfew and choice of friends are addressed.

The books distinguish three different parenting styles: 1) *Helicopter* parents who are quick to rush in and rescue their children from any possible misfortune—and learning experience; 2) *Drill Sergeant* parents who make all decisions, mistakenly thinking that they have the ultimate power and control over their children; 3) *Consultant* parents who make enforceable statements to their children while providing a sense of personal dignity through the choices offered to them.

Love & Logic helps parents learn to share control and thinking with their children by balancing consequences with empathy, using enforceable limits and providing choices within limits for their children. Through parental guidance, children are taught a problem solving model which the children can then be expected to apply when faced with difficult situations.

Many of the ideas in these books are not new, just presented with a delightful sense of humor and a new twist that makes it difficult to resist trying out the ideas presented. For example, when a child shows her father her poor report card, the result of too much socializing and minimal studying, he doesn't chastise her but demonstrates the use of consequences with empathy by saying how upset he knows she must be about her grades and that he will continue to love her no matter how long it takes her to pass the seventh grade. He lets her know that he believes she has the ability to resolve the problem and allows her the opportunity to do so.

The Love & Logic program also includes materials for teachers, including the book *Teaching with Love and Logic*, and multitudes of audio tapes and videos directed toward specific problems both at home and at school, such as setting limits, enforcing chores, teaching responsibility and stopping classroom stealing and lying. These and other resources are available from: Cline-Fay Love and Logic Institute, Inc., 2207 Jackson Street, Golden, CO 80401; 1-800-338-4065. ◆

Beth Berghoff, Ph.D., NCSP, LMFT is a school psychologist for the Cumberland County Schools, Fayetteville, NC and has a marriage and family therapy practice. Paul Berghoff, Ph.D. is Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

■ Retention and Promotion... *from page 1*

- Some children seem to suffer no ill-effects from retention. However, by the time they enter middle school, many children who were held back tend to get into trouble, dislike school, and feel badly about themselves more often than do children who were never retained. There is some evidence that retained children are more likely to have mental health problems than those who are not retained.
- "Transition kindergarten" is a type of retention and generally is no more helpful than promotion to first grade.
- The most consistent finding is that retained children have a much higher likelihood of dropping out of school than nonretained children.
- Retention might be less harmful for children who feel good about themselves, get along well with others, and have the skills to catch up easily. It is often difficult to predict which children will benefit from retention, however.
- Retention might be helpful for a child who missed a lot of school due to illness or family moves, if the attendance problem is solved and the child will be only one year older than classmates.
- Simply promoting a low performing child on to the next grade is not an effective practice.

What Can Parents Do To Help?

Neither retention nor promotion will help a child learn! But in order to succeed, your child might need different instruction, not the same things again that didn't work the first time. Parents and teachers can work together to help children succeed. By catching the problem early, there are more opportunities to help children before they have a sense of failure, and there are greater chances for success.

Discuss concerns with your child's teacher. Find out what work your child is expected to do, and what work your child finds difficult. Ask a lot of questions—how does he or she get along with classmates? Does he or she understand and remember to follow directions? Does he or she finish assignments on time? What changes has the teacher tried to help your child? Are there other ways to teach the same material? Are there other books and materials that might help your child learn? What are some activities that you can help with at home to help your child catch up? Ask the teacher for some ideas! And try to find a time to visit the classroom and watch your child at work.

Help your child with schoolwork at home. Ask your child about homework each day. Help him or her to find a quiet time and place to study. Check to see if your child can explain the assignment

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■ Retention and Promotion... *from page 2*

to you or read the directions. Make sure your child understands that you think schoolwork is important.

Make sure your child is ready for school each day! Be sure your child attends school on time every day, eats balanced meals, gets enough sleep and receives good medical care. Children need to be alert and healthy to succeed in school!

Where Can I Get More Help?

It can be frustrating to know your child is not succeeding at school. It can make a parent feel upset or angry. Before considering retention, parents can get help from other professionals at school. These people offer ideas for parents and teachers about how to change instruction. They also provide testing to find out if a child needs other services such as tutoring or special education and may have some different learning materials that will work with your child. They can help children who have low self-esteem or poor social skills so that they "fit in" and feel better about themselves. At your child's school, you might contact the:

- School psychologist
- School problem-solving or support team ("Intervention Assistance Team")
- School social worker
- School nurse
- Guidance counselor
- Special education teacher
- Reading specialist
- Principal

For more information, contact your school psychologist or:

The National Association of School Psychologists, 4340 East West Highway #402, Bethesda, MD 20814; Website at <*http//:www.naspweb.org*> ♦

Resources

Mack, A. (1997). *A+ Parents: Help your child learn and succeed in school.* McBooks.

Martin, M. & Waltman-Greenwood, C. (Eds.). (1995). *Solve your child's school-related problems.* New York: HarperPerennial.

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Retention in grade: Looking for alternatives. (1992). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.

Shepard, L. & Smith, M. (1989). *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention.* New York: Falmer Press.

Should My Child Repeat a Grade? (Brochure published by NASP; see above address)

Original handout published by NASP (1992); revised by Andrea Canter, Ph.D., NCSP (1998)

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Position Statement

Effective Parenting: Positive Support for Families

The issue of how to provide appropriate and adequate parenting and discipline is of great concern to the educational community. Parents want well-behaved children. They want children to grow up to be contented, productive, responsible and self disciplined. Some children's behaviors are particularly challenging. Noncompliance and aggressive behaviors can bring out the worst in parents. Neither extremes of severe physical punishment nor limitless freedom will lead to long-term behavior change. School psychologists can help parents and caregivers develop practical and effective ways of disciplining and parenting children.

Discipline is a word that makes most people uncomfortable. It is typically used as a synonym for punishment, often for physical punishment. Discipline comes from the Latin word *disciplina* meaning instruction or teaching. Discipline, so defined, places the parent as the leader or teacher and the child as the student. A parent teaches values, good judgment, self control and caring for others through daily interactions with children. A parent sets limits and makes appropriate responses when a child does something that is in conflict with parental wishes. Effective parenting is safe, nurturing and instructive. Physical punishment can be harmful physically, emotionally and socially. It is usually ineffective because it does not teach appropriate behaviors, but teaches that hitting is acceptable in dealing with others. The National Association of School Psychologists supports the use of discipline practices that treat children with respect while shaping their behavior to encourage self-control and caring for others.

Preventing Behavior Problems

The National Association of School Psychologists believes that the following parenting practices help prevent the development of behavior problems in children:

- ***Developing a trusting relationship***: When children feel loved and respected by parents, they want to please them. Parents form trusting relationships with their children by exhibiting predictable and mature behavior and by protecting them from harm. Children who feel safe to make mistakes can learn to make better decisions in the future. A trusting relationship between parents and children is the cornerstone of effective discipline.
- ***Developing appropriate expectations:*** Children need to understand the expectations their parents have for them, and they need to feel they can meet those expectations. These expectations must be appropriate for the child's age, temperament, and abilities. Children with learning or behavioral disabilities provide additional challenges to parents who must adjust their expectations to their child's unique needs and developmental patterns.
- ***Setting limits:*** Limits can help children feel that the world is orderly, predictable and safe. Parents should consider the child's age and development when setting limits. Limits should be enforced consistently, and there should be clear and appropriate consequences when those limits are challenged.
- ***Offering praise***: Praising children's appropriate behavior will increase that behavior. Praise for specific behaviors is the basis for effective behavior management and should be used abundantly.

Effective Ways of Dealing with Misbehavior

The National Association of School Psychologists urges school psychologists to promote the development of effective discipline practices through the following interventions:

- ***Early intervention programs***: Home visitation programs for parents of newborns are an effective means of teaching and supporting parents in the difficult job of raising children. These programs provide parents with knowledge about normal development, realistic expectations, and how to keep babies healthy and safe. School psychologists can take a leadership role in developing community support for these programs.
- ***School-wide programs to encourage effective discipline***: Peer mediation, conflict resolution, and social skills training are all proven ways to help children develop responsible behavior. By incorporating regular communication with parents and opportunities for their participation, the effectiveness of these programs can be enhanced. School psychologists can bring leadership, research, and management skills to the development of these programs.
- ***Consultation to parents:*** School psychologists have unique opportunities to talk with parents about discipline. In consulting with parents on children's learning and behavior problems, school psychologists can provide a) behavioral expectations appropriate to the child's age and development, b) alternative methods of behavior management such as time out, logical consequences, behavioral contracting, positive reinforcement, and privilege systems, and c) information about school and community resources such as parenting programs and professional help available beyond school services.
- ***Parent education classes***: School psychologists are in an ideal position to provide parent training using a variety of research-supported parent education programs. They can help parents develop positive approaches to behavior management including limit setting, use of praise and reinforcement, giving effective commands, reducing negative parent-child interactions, and using negotiating and mediation. School psychologists can also provide guidance for parents on school-related concerns such as homework, report cards, and peer relationships.

Summary

Raising self-disciplined children is one challenge among many facing parents in American society today. Parents have little or not training in effective parenting and they are often removed from extended families which have in the past been available to provide support and relief from the stress of child rearing. Discipline is too often viewed as "punishment" which may lead parents to equate more discipline with harsher punishments.

The National Association of School Psychologists encourages school psychologists and other professionals working with children and families to help parents develop effective discipline practices that are positive, safe, and instructive. School psychologists can help parents by supporting, developing, and implementing school and community programs which build healthy parent-child relationships and strengthen the home to enable children to become caring and responsible members of society.

—Adopted by the Delegate Assembly, April 18, 1998

Section 504
An Introduction for Parents

by Michael Perla, Ed. S., NCSP
Cobb County (GA) Public Schools

Background

Section 504 is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and applies to all institutions receiving federal financial assistance, such as public schools. The law essentially places an obligation on public schools to provide a "free appropriate public education" to children with disabilities, along with related services such as transportation and counseling. The main purpose of 504 is to prohibit discrimination while assuring that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Although Section 504 took effect in 1973, many states have not developed policies or guidelines on 504. Section 504 is anti-discrimination legislation, not a federal grant program. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) monitors compliance under 504. Unlike special education laws, Section 504 does not provide financial support to schools.

A student is considered to be handicapped under 504 if he or she (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. Limiting a major life activity is an important part of this definition and includes handicaps that limit taking care of oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing or learning. The last example, learning, is the one frequently considered in 504 cases in the schools. Section 504 requires school districts to offer services to some children who might not qualify for special education benefits under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA; this federal act funds special education services). For example, children who have AIDS, asthma and diabetes may all be covered under Section 504.

Eligibility/Assessment/Accommodations Under 504

Although schools are not necessarily required to evaluate children based only on a parental request for evaluation, the school must still inform parents of their rights to dispute their decisions. Schools must notify parents of their rights regarding identification, evaluation and placement of children with suspected handicaps prior to starting a Section 504 evaluation. In addition, students who are not found eligible under IDEA should be considered for possible eligibility under Section 504. In a 504 referral, the school often tries to determine: (1) Does the student have a physical or mental impairment? (2) Does the impairment affect one of the major life activities? If the answers to these questions are yes, the student may be entitled to a Section 504 accommodation plan. Accommodations must be based on a child's educational needs and may include curricular, classroom, school and grading modifications.

Section 504 requires school districts to develop detailed procedures for identifying and serving children with disabilities. Under 504, school districts must annually publish public notices stating that they do not discriminate, with the notice specifying the person selected to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with Section 504. Most school districts are required to have a Section 504 coordinator. This coordinator is usually selected from local district personnel, such as superintendents, guidance counselors and special education directors. Like other special education laws, 504 requires schools to conduct activities that will help locate and identify children who have disabilities and are not currently receiving needed special services. A notice of these activities should be sent to parents or put in places where parents of children with disabilities are likely to see them.

Parental Rights and Procedures Under 504

Referral: Parents, guardians or school personnel may refer students suspected of having a handicap to the Section 504 coordinator or similar personnel. Potential candidates for 504 services include children with cancer, communicable diseases, medical conditions and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Information about rights: Parents and guardians should be provided their rights under Section 504:

1) when eligibility is determined,
2) when a plan is developed and
3) before there is a significant change in placement.

Evaluation procedures: The school's procedures for evaluation must ensure that the tests are appropriate for the child's specific educational need, are administered by qualified personnel and are comprehensive.

Right to a hearing: If the parents or guardians disagree with the identification, evaluation or placement of their child, they have the right to an impartial hearing with school personnel.

Rights of due process: Under 504, parents have the rights of due process. These rights include the right of notification, the right to inspect records, the right to participate in a hearing with representation and the right to a review procedure.

Services under 504: If a child is found eligible under 504, services are primarily provided in the regular education classroom. The types of services offered might include the use of behavioral management techniques (e.g., a token economy), adjusting class schedules, modifying tests and tailoring homework assignments.

Home-school collaboration: Parents can help increase the likelihood that 504 plans are effective by working closely with general educators and other school personnel to implement intervention programs both at school and at home. Regular parent-teacher conferences are likely to help foster this relationship. ♦

Resources for Parents

Rothstein, L.F. (1995). *Special education law (2nd ed.)*. New York: Longman Publishers.

Zirkel, P.A. (1993). *Section 504 and the schools*. Horsham, PA: LRP Publications.

Computers and Children

A Guide for Parents

by William Pfohl, Psy.D., NCSP
and Shawna Ferstl, Western Kentucky University

Background

In this new age of technology, many aspects of our daily lives involve using personal computers. Some adults have a fear of computers because they don't understand how computers work. This fear may be the biggest reason why people hold back from accessing the unlimited world of information that computers offer. Due to technological advances, early exposure and "lack of fear," most children are not intimidated by computers. Today's children are likely to grow up playing computer games (such as Sega and Nintendo) or be exposed to computers within their school curriculum.

Computers Can Promote Children's Development

With increasing media focus on possible harmful side effects of using computers, it is difficult for parents to know what is best for their child. Despite the negative media, research has shown that computers offer numerous advantages to children when used properly and under adult supervision. Computers can:

- enhance children's development of cognitive and language skills
- aid in the development of eye-hand coordination in preschoolers
- enhance development of reasoning, logical thinking skills and problem solving strategies
- allow children to learn through a variety of senses
- provide an array of information sources such as multimedia enhancements and interactive software
- stimulate children's curiosity and creativity
- permit children to work at their own rate, reducing peer

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Online Advertising and Children

Guidelines for Advocates

by Victoria Stanhope
National Association of School Psychologists

Background

While cyberspace provides children with a powerful educational tool, it can also make them prey to advertisers eager for new consumers. Currently, more than a million children are online, with that number projected to reach fifteen million by the end of the century. With more schools gaining access to the Internet, teachers and school professionals should be aware that it is a highly unregulated medium that has commercial sites vying with educational sites to gain the attention of children.

Advertisers often ask children to give out personal information, including name, address, phone number, favorite product information and facts about family members before giving them access to online areas or in exchange for free merchandise. Often they have animated product "spokespersons" that send children e-mail to develop a specific brand loyalty at a very young age. Major companies that are involved in online advertising include Kelloggs, Frito-Lay, Disney, McDonalds and Warner Brothers. The under-18 market is highly lucrative with children spending an estimated $160 billion of their families' incomes on products.

Companies are hiring psychologists to find out the "hidden motivators" that draw children into cyberspace consumer-driven relationships with little parental oversight. Unlike television, which recognizes the special vulnerability of children to advertising and has certain safeguard measures, the information superhighway has no such safeguards. A survey of advertising by the Center for Media Education even found that some children's areas in the commercial online services contained unlabeled advertising.

Guidelines to Protect Children

In response to these deceitful practices, children's advocates are calling for guidelines for advertisers to ensure cyberspace is a safe and productive environment for children to learn. These are some of the ways you can help:

- Teach children that they should not give out any personal information in cyberspace, just as they should not talk to strangers in their neighborhood.
- Talk with parents and make them aware of the dangers of online advertising.
- Educate your local PTA, school board and other community groups about the issue.
- Make sure your school has policies that restrict the use of commercially-oriented areas.
- Complain to companies that use deceptive practices to target children online. Your voice is important. ♦

Resource

The above information comes from the Center for Media Education's Action for Children in Cyberspace Project. To learn more, order a copy of the report, "Web of Deception: Threats to Children from Online Marketing" from the Center for Media Education, 1511 K St. NW, Suite 518, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 628-2620; e-mail: <cme@cme.org; web site: www.cme.org/cme>

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■ Computers and Children... *from page 6*

pressure to speed through activities without mastering concepts being taught

- help children with academic problem areas through drill and practice software
- make learning both entertaining and enjoyable for the child with the large video monitors, CD-ROMS and sound cards found with today's computers

Parents who want to build their child's **self-confidence** can ask their child to explain the computer, its programs, and games. It does wonders for the child to think he/she knows more than the parent. Also, if more than one individual in the family uses the computer, the child learns **social skills** such as waiting to take turns and respecting others' property (e.g., files, disks, etc.).

Disadvantages of Computers

Although computers have many advantages for children and adults, parents do need to be aware of some of the disadvantages. One significant disadvantage is when the computer becomes a babysitter. Parental involvement while the child learns about and uses the computer is essential. Quality family time should not be replaced by numerous hours of sitting in front of a computer monitor (or TV for that matter). Children still need to get outdoors and engage in physical exercise in order to stay healthy. Also, research is presently being conducted to find out if too much electromagnetic radiation from long term exposure to computers can be a health hazard. Keep alert to these upcoming findings. However, of all the disadvantages listed thus far, probably the most unfortunate one is that a computer may not fit into the family's budget. If this is the case, check for services available in your area (such as your local library or public schools) where computers may be accessible to the family.

What Computer Should You Buy?

Two basic types are available, either an IBM/compatible or Macintosh. Your child may have used one type at school and liked it, or you may use one type at work. Macintosh is superior in graphics and ease of use. IBM/compatibles have a wider range of software and have greatly improved graphics recently. You need to buy as much computer as you can afford, as the technology is changing every eighteen to twenty-four months. Shopping for a computer for your family can be confusing. For your first computer purchase, you might find it helpful to attend a community education class or a class offered by one of the local computer stores. Many communities also have "computer user groups" which can offer advice. There are also many publications — books and magazines — which provide basic comparative information. Finally, consider consulting computer instructors at local colleges and public schools, as well as knowledgeable friends.

Basic Computer Skills for Children

Prior to working with the computer, your child may need to be taught some basic computer literacy skills. The computer components (mouse, keyboard, monitor, CD-ROM, etc.) should be explained to the child, using basic, simple definitions and explanations that the child can understand. Many of the new computers have demonstration programs to help beginners learn how to use these different components. Once the computer components have been explained, start practicing with the keyboard and the mouse. Most software is in the Windows type format and requires use of a mouse to move around the programs. Young children should begin to learn how to manipulate the mouse by "clicking and dragging" objects on the screen. Older school-aged children, who already know how to manipulate the mouse, can start off practicing with the keyboard and its different components. While children should be taught to respect the computer as they would any other expensive and sensitive equipment, with young children around, some parents may want to cover the front panel of the computer to decrease the child's temptation to stick things (pencils, toys, etc.) in the CD-ROM and disk drives.

Software and Online Material for Children

Building a well-rounded library of software can be a great way to keep children interested and motivated to learn about a wide range of things. Software needs to be easy to use and should teach specific skills; these are typically listed on the box. Remember, violent software may have negative effects on your child, as does violent TV. Supply your child with his/her own brightly colored or personalized disks. Also, parents can use a password to limit children's access to the files, the command prompt (C:\), and file directories that you wish to keep the child away from. Children should be taught to respect others' programs, as computers are often community property.

Online services: Parents are hearing more about the potentially negative effects of online services (America OnLine, Prodigy , etc.) or Internet. The Internet Highway can offer many exciting opportunities, if monitored and supervised properly. However, parents need to be aware that some inappropriate information is available to children online. Parents may want to supervise their children while they are online and tell their children that they should not give personal information about themselves to *anyone* online. They also should be reminded not to fill in any "forms" online for free materials or to sign-up for activities without strict parent supervision.

Set Guidelines for Computer Use

Before introducing your child to the world available through computers, parents need to develop guidelines to assure their children's safe and enjoyable computer usage:

- Establish rules and boundaries so the child knows when and how to use the computer
- Give your child support and encouragement — help the child become comfortable with the computer through basic computer skills (see above)
- Teach your child that mistakes are okay
- Teach your child to stop and ask an adult for help if a problem occurs with the computer or program
- As noted above, using online services has many pitfalls and families should establish strict rules regarding access to such programs and provide supervision
- Gather information regularly about computers through discussions with friends, subscribing to children's or family-focused computer magazines or attending computer-user group meetings ♦

School Phobia/School Avoidance/School Refusal

A Handout for Parents

by Leslie Z. Paige, Ed.S., NCSP
Hays West Central (KS)
Special Education Cooperative

Background

School phobia/school avoidance/school refusal are terms used to describe children who have a pattern of avoiding or refusing to attend school. Different from truancy, these behaviors occur in approximately 2% of school aged children. Historically called "school phobia", many researchers now prefer to use the terms "school avoidance" or "school refusal". There is confusion regarding the terms because children who experience significant difficulty in attending school do so for different reasons and exhibit different behaviors. In general, children who refuse to attend or avoid school stay in close contact with their parents or caregivers, and are frequently (although not always) anxious and fearful. They may become very upset or become ill when forced to go to school. Truants may be distinguished from this group by their antisocial or delinquent behaviors, their lack of anxiety about missing school, and the fact that they are not in contact with parents or caregivers when they are avoiding school.

Development

Part of the confusion regarding the term "school phobia" is that the behaviors are not usually considered to be a true phobia. Although some children fear school-related activities (bus ride, reading aloud in class, changing for physical education), some are anxious about home issues or about being separated from a caregiver. Children become anxious for many reasons. "Separation anxiety" typically occurs at about the age of 18 to 24 months. Toddlers will cry, cling and have temper tantrums when they are about to be separated from their caregiver (for daycare or a babysitter, for example). This is normal at this age, but some older children continue to have difficulty separating from caregivers.

Sometimes school-aged children who were previously able to separate from their caregivers will suddenly become anxious and fearful. A recent crisis in the community or the family (such as a death, divorce, financial problems, move, etc.) may cause a child to become fearful or anxious. Some children fear that something terrible will happen at home while they are at school. Children who are struggling in school with academic or social problems may also develop school refusal. Many children have social concerns and may have been teased or bullied at school or on the way to school. Some neighborhoods or schools are unsafe or chaotic.

Children who have missed a lot of school due to illness or surgery may experience difficulty returning to the classroom routines as well as academic and social demands. Still other children prefer to stay home because they can watch tv, have parental attention, and play rather than work in school. Children and youth who are transitioning (from elementary to middle school, or middle school to high school) may feel very stressed. All of these factors may lead to the development of school refusal/avoidance. Additionally, many children avoid or refuse school for a combination of reasons, further complicating treatment.

If untreated, chronic school refusal or avoidance may result in more than family distress. Academic deterioration, poor peer relationships, school or legal conflicts, work or college avoidance, panic attacks, agoraphobia and adult psychological or psychiatric disorders may result.

What Can Parents Do?

PREVENTION

Toddlers and preschoolers can benefit from structured experiences with other adults. Parents can help young children to separate from caregivers in several ways. Reliable and safe babysitting or daycare are excellent examples. Many communities have opportunities for preschoolers such as story hour at the library, preschool religious training such as bible school, recreational activities, preschool etc. When the child fusses at separation from the parent, the best strategy is to inform the child calmly that the parent will return and that the child is to stay. Then leave quickly. Children typically have more difficulty separating if their parents hover, linger, become upset, wait for the child to calm down or attempt to reason with the child . A firm, caring and quick separation is usually better for both parent and child. Preschool caregivers will typically report that the child's distress quickly disappears. However, children whose parents prolong the separation or who have had unsuccessful preschool separation experiences may need more time or support to calm down. This may be because they have learned that their distress results in parental rescue from separation! Successful preschool experiences ease the transition to preschool or kindergarten.

WHEN CHILDREN REFUSE OR AVOID SCHOOL

If complaints of illness are the excuse for not attending school, have the child checked by the family medical provider. If there is no medical reason to be absent , the child should be at school. The parent should attempt to discover if there is a specific problem causing the refusal. Sometimes the child feels relief just by expressing concerns about friends or school expectations. If the child is able to pinpoint a specific concern (such as worry about tests, teasing, etc.), then the parent should immediately talk to the child's teacher about developing an appropriate plan to solve the problem. Some common sense strategies to try include having another family member bring the child to school, or if the child does stay home then rewards such as snacking, tv, toys, or parental attention should be eliminated. A school schedule may be duplicated at home.

However, if the child is extremely upset, if the child needs to be forced to attend school, if there is significant family stress, or if the refusal to attend school is becoming habitual, the family should not hesitate in asking for assistance from the school psychologist, school counselor, or other mental health professionals. Parents and the school need to work together to identify what is causing or maintaining this behavior and to develop a comprehensive plan of intervention. A key to success is rapid intervention; the longer the behavior occurs, the harder it is to treat.

Treatment depends upon the causes, which can be difficult to determine. Many children may have started to avoid school for one

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Study Skills
A Handout for Parents

by Virginia Smith Harvey, Ph.D.
University of Massachusetts-Boston

Overview

Many capable children at all grade levels experience frustration and failure in school, not because they lack ability, but because they do not have adequate *study skills*. Good study habits are important for success in school, to foster feelings of competence, to develop positive attitudes, and to help children realize they can control how well they do in school and in life. Good study habits lay the groundwork for successful work habits as an adult.

For children to learn good study skills, teachers and parents must work together. It is most important to help children build good habits, to develop a system that works for an individual child, and to use the system effectively and consistently. Preferred learning styles vary from child to child. Children need to discover how they learn and then work out a study system that fits best. Parents of elementary aged children usually help their children more than parents of adolescents. However, adolescents also need parental support and encouragement throughout high school.

Four Basic Principles to Enhance Study Skills

1. Make homework completion a positive experience: associate it with love and affection, freedom, fun and control.
2. Make homework completion a high priority.
3. Use homework completion to teach organization skills and improve learning skills. Remember that the primary purpose of homework is to improve learning and foster work habits.
4. Provide and enforce logical and meaningful consequences.

Make Homework Completion a Positive Experience

Associate it with love and affection, freedom, fun, and control. Possible ways to do this are to:

- Provide support and praise for homework completion.
- Be available to provide non-critical assistance.
- Give children choice in when, where, and how they complete homework assignments.
- Encourage your children to complete homework well enough that they have a sense of control over their own learning and levels of competence.
- Maintain a positive and helpful attitude: avoid criticism and anger.
- Help children understand what types of homework they enjoy and encourage them to choose assignments accordingly. Some prefer written reports, others prefer hands-on projects.
- Use homework preferences in developing a homework schedule. Some children prefer to get disliked homework done first, while others prefer to do their easier work first.
- When a child dislikes subject, find ways to make it less frustrating. For example, set a goal of doing five math problems and then taking a stretch.
- Encourage your children to participate in study groups with friends. Research shows that children who form study groups achieve at a much higher level than children who always study alone.
- Encourage your child to have fun such as eating a snack, calling friends, starting an activity, or watching a favorite show when homework is finished.
- Never use homework as a punishment.
- Be a good listener, and encourage your child to ask questions about things that are hard to understand.
- Set aside time for your children to share with you the skills and information they are acquiring.
- Help children study for tests by quizzing them on the material in a friendly manner.
- Have your children imagine themselves as excellent students. Then brainstorm what needs to be done to make that a reality.

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■ School Phobia... *from page 8*

reason (e.g., fear of being disciplined by a teacher, feeling socially inadequate) but are now staying home for another reason (e.g., access to video games, lack of academic pressure, etc.). Several treatment plans my need to be tried. Helping the child to relax, develop better coping skills, improve social skills, using a contract and helping the parents with parenting or family issues are all examples of possible treatments. ♦

Resources

Martin, M. & Waltham-Greenwood, C. (1995). *Solve your child's school related problems*. New York: Harper Perenniel (School phobia, pp. 208-213).

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■ Study Skills... *from page 9*

Make Homework Completion a High Priority

- Make clear that you expect your children to complete homework well.

- Establish a study routine: children should be in the habit of studying at the same time and in the same place each day. Children and parents should decide, together, upon the study routine by taking into account scheduled activities, family commitments, and favorite TV shows. Also, consider the child's ability to concentrate at different times of the day. Many elementary school children are too tired after dinner, and show this by having trouble concentrating, being easily frustrated, and being slow to complete tasks. Ideally, the family agrees upon a study hour, the television and stereo are off, phone calls are not taken, and the entire family studies, reads, or completes paperwork.

- Establish a place to study with good lighting and a table or desk. Some children prefer to study in their own room. Others do better if they are studying at the kitchen table or other location near parental help. Some children are able to study with a little background noise such as music. Few can study effectively in front of the TV and most need uninterrupted quiet. Other children may prefer to work at the library, and will need transportation.

- Have supplies on hand including binders, notebooks, paper, pencils, pens, assignment books, erasers, dictionaries, a calculator, ruler, hole punch, tape, glue, reference books and/or programs.

- Demonstrate, and enforce, that homework completion is a higher priority than other activities. A child should not watch TV and talk with friends before completing homework, unless time later in the day has been set aside upon for homework completion.

- Reduce activities if a child has so many commitments that there is insufficient time for homework.

- Have help available for every subject. This might be a parent, neighbor, friend, teacher hot line, an on-line homework service, or a tutor. The helper needs to be someone who is knowledgeable about the subject and who can help the child without becoming frustrated or angry.

- Establish a family expectation that studying for exams is expected and takes priority over other activities.

Use Homework Completion to Teach Organization Skills and Improve Learning

Keep in mind that the primary purpose of homework is to improve learning and foster work habits Possible ways to do this are to:

- Encourage your child to use an assignment book, write all assignments into the book daily, and check them off when completed. Your child should also break down long term assignments, such as projects, into smaller parts and write each part into the assignment book. Many children also find it helpful to put other commitments into the assignment book as well, including music lessons, sports, and jobs.

- Encourage your children to estimate how long it will take to complete each assignment and plan their schedule accordingly.

- Help your children set goals regarding how well they want to do on an assignment and how much effort it will take to do that well. This will help them learn to divide study time effectively.

- Help your children learn to plan for finishing assignments on time. They should start working on major assignments or reviewing for major tests well ahead.

- Help your children expand their concentration time. At first they may be able to concentrate for only 10 minutes. Parents can help their children build up this length of time gradually, so that homework takes less time. Even high school students should take a 10 to 15 minute break after studying for 45 or 50 minutes. Otherwise, they lose the ability to concentrate.

- Encourage your child to circle the verbs in directions.

- Encourage your child to review class notes and add details, make corrections, and highlight the most important information.

- Encourage your children to improve reading skills by having them pre-read non-fiction reading assignments (reviewing the headings, picture captions, reviewing tables, charts, and graphs). Children can pre-read fiction by reading the front cover, back cover, and introduction, and skimming the first quarter to determine setting, character, and plot.

- Encourage your child to determine the meaning of unknown words by using the context or by looking them up in a dictionary and writing them down.

- Help your child learn effective reading techniques such as SQ3R, where the reader:

  Surveys: Looks over the material before beginning to read to obtain a general orientation.

  Questions: Writes down questions about the material before beginning to read.

  Reads through the material in the normal way.

  Recites and Writes: Writes down or gives the answers to another person.

  Reviews: Goes over the material several times before being tested.

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- Encourage your child to outline or "map" reading material for better understanding. To "map," a child places the main topic in the middle of a blank sheet of paper. Then a branch is drawn for each subheading, and supporting details are placed on smaller branches going out from the subheadings. This creates a visual aid that increases organization and comprehension.

- Make sure your children are able to understand their textbooks. Children should be able to read 9 out of 10 words accurately and answer correctly a least 3 out of 4 questions.

- Help your child predict outcomes, distinguish fact from opinion, discern emotional appeals, recognize bias, discern inference as they read.

- Encourage your children to organize thoughts before beginning a written assignment, and write at least two drafts.

- Have your child proofread and check for success or failure in answering the purpose of the assignment, legibility, neatness, spelling, complete sentences, and punctuation errors.

- Help your child to see tests as an opportunity to "show off" what they have learned, rather than something to be feared.

- Help your children predict test questions as they study for tests.

- Encourage your child to space learning over several sessions instead of cramming the night before. Five hours of study spread over a week is better than studying five hours the night before the test: cramming for tests increases anxiety and causes lower grades.

- Avoid acting as a tutor for your child. If a child needs a tutor in a particular subject, call the local high school and ask for a student tutor through the Honor Society.

Provide and Enforce Logical and Meaningful Consequences

- Each week, have your children assess their own homework completion by reviewing returned papers, tests and quizzes, and current grades. With your children, note their progress, improvements, areas of need, and jointly plan how to solve any problems.

- Display well-done work in a prominent place, such as on the refrigerator door.

- With their help, graph your children's grades. Include the grades for each class, the average grade for all classes, and an agreed upon target line. The target line should be the grades that you and your children agree are reasonable and obtainable (if your child is now receiving D's, a reasonable goal is grades of C: to first set the goal at A's will lead to frustration). Discuss the graph with your children, help your children identify any patterns of poor performance, and jointly develop solution plans.

- Teach your children to bring all necessary materials home. If your children get in the habit of "forgetting" homework materials, have them spend time on reading or working on other academic activities during the agreed upon study time. Your children could also walk back to school to pick up forgotten materials, or be charged "gas money" out of their allowance for being driven back to school. Or, with the help of a school psychologist or counselor, set up a system that rewards them for bringing everything home.

- Sometimes children "lose" completed homework in their books or backpack. Placing all completed homework in one folder in the backpack can solve this problem.

- If a child does not complete homework, reduce the freedom the child has until grades improve and the teacher indicates that the problem is solved. Methods of reducing freedom might be (a) giving your child less control about where and when homework is completed, (b) parents checking the quality of completed homework every evening, (c) parents and teachers maintaining ongoing communication in the assignment book, or (d) the child not being able to participate in a planned activity such as a field trip.

- Reward your child for good grades and for improving grades. Your child's preferences should be considered in deciding upon the reward, but the rewards need not be expensive. Going out together for an ice cream cone, or telephoning a grandparent to tell them of the child's success, are examples of inexpensive but effective rewards.

- Provide support and genuine praise for homework completion and good study habits. ♦

Resources

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Mack, A. (1997). *A+ Parents: Help your child learn and succeed in school*. McBooks.

Rosemond, J. (1990). *Ending the homework hassle: Understanding, preventing and solving school performance problems*. Andrews & McMeel.

"Education and health for children are inextricably entwined. A student who is not healthy... is not a student who will profit optimally from the educational process."

—J. Michael McGinnis, Director,
Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

School Entry Decisions

A Guide for Parents

by Paula Laidig, Ph.D., NCSP
Stillwater, MN Area Schools

How Do We Know if a Child is Ready For Kindergarten?

Are there benefits to delaying kindergarten entrance?

Are there benefits to starting kindergarten early?

Kindergarten readiness is the concept that children have developed a group of skills necessary to learn. It can include readiness to read, write and count; to sit and listen; to follow two-step directions; to ask an adult for help; to interact appropriately with other children; to toilet independently. These and numerous other factors related to readiness are found in popular and child development literature, but there is no universal set of behaviors required for a child to enter kindergarten. In fact, the sole requirement for kindergarten entrance in the United States is chronological age; children must be five years old by a certain date, usually by September first.

What we know about readiness in young children: Young children learn at different rates and markedly so from preschool through age eight. For example, while most children can learn to decode words during their sixth year, it is normal for children to learn as young as four and as old as seven years of age. This wide but normal range is also true for drawing, writing letters and numbers, counting, speaking clearly and following multiple directions. So it is to be expected that a typical kindergarten class should include children entering with wide variation in their school- related skills.

Factors in Delaying Kindergarten Entrance

Although readiness is legally defined as reaching the age of five by a certain date, many parents and educators have become concerned that some kindergarten-age children seem socially or physically immature or lacking the skills to read, write and compute. Over the last 20 years or so, delaying entrance to kindergarten by one year has become a common response, especially for boys who turn five within four or five months of the kindergarten cut-off date. A review of the research on delayed entrance and on children who are the youngest within their grade has shown that:

- Delaying kindergarten until age six has not resulted in improvement in reading, writing or math skills;
- At kindergarten and first grade, youngest children do score lower on achievement tests, but the difference tends to diminish as grade level increases, usually disappearing by third grade (one researcher noted that six-year-olds *should* look more skilled than five-year-olds in kindergarten; they have been alive 20 percent longer);
- Delayed entrants 4 to 12 years after entering school were no more academically skilled, athletically involved or socially successful than students who had entered kindergarten after just turning five years old;
- Students who are one year too old for a grade level are much more likely to drop out of high school.

Factors in Starting Kindergarten Early

While some parents choose to delay their child's kindergarten entrance by one year, there are others who request that their child enter kindergarten one year early, at four years of age. With birthdates one to three months after the kindergarten cutoff, these children tend to be early and quick learners, socially mature and most often girls. Schools that allow early entrance usually require some formal testing and possibly a simulated or "trial" kindergarten experience to determine if the candidates are advanced beyond the typical kindergarten skills. Research on early entrance to kindergarten has shown that when the early entrants, boys or girls, have *superior intelligence*, and when their parents and the receiving teacher *support the decision* and have *realistic expectations* of the child:

- Academic achievement, athletic involvement and social adjustment were at least as great as children of similar intelligence who entered at age five.
- One researcher who reviewed several studies noted that, "there is no reason to conclude that the early entrants would have achieved more and adjusted better if they had entered school at the usual time."

Recommendations for Parents Considering Delayed Entrance

All parents and educators want children to be successful in school. When parents believe their child may struggle or fail in kindergarten, delaying entrance by one year has become a common practice and some educators have recommended it. However, experts in child development generally agree that, rather than trying to fit the child to the program, schools should tailor the program to accommodate the individual differences in the kindergarten class. Teachers should assess each child's entrance skills and design curriculum to advance him or her to the next skill level. So before deciding to delay a child's entrance to kindergarten by one year, parents should consider:

- Meeting with the prospective kindergarten teacher to discuss how the school program would meet their child's individual needs and skill level, keeping in mind that the only school entrance requirement is to be five years old; and/or
- Requesting formal educational assessment if there is concern that the child may have an educational disability. Preschool special education services may be available.

Recommendations for Parents Considering Early Entrance

When parents believe their child is advanced intellectually and socially, early entrance may be one option. Before deciding to request early entrance, parents should consider:

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Lead Poisoning in Young Children

Parent Handout

by Julie McNamara, Thuy Lindsey and Judy Singer
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Background

Lead is a metal that is toxic when consumed and can interfere with the functioning of almost every organ in the body. The ingestion of lead is especially dangerous for children because their developing intestinal track cannot remove lead effectively; therefore it is readily absorbed. One in six children in the U.S. are diagnosed with lead poisoning, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in 1991. Consequences of lead poisoning can range from various developmental and intellectual delays to more profound impairment including seizures, blindness and, in extremely toxic cases, death. Although it is not known how much lead a child's body can tolerate without adverse effects, current research on lead has prompted the CDC to lower the level of concern to 10 mcg/dl.

It is not unusual for a child with lead poisoning to have no obvious symptoms. Consequently, the majority of cases go undiagnosed and untreated. Primary prevention through universal screening is essential because, although lead poisoning tends to occur more frequently in some communities, no geographic area, socio-economic status or racial or ethnic group is spared of the effects of lead.

Characteristics Associated With Lead Poisoning

- attention and concentration difficulties
- lower scores on intelligence tests
- decreased verbal ability
- hyperactivity
- reading difficulties
- behavior problems
- coordination difficulties
- higher referral rate to special education classes
- poor school achievement
- increased school drop-out rates
- impaired growth and development

Although these symptoms may caused by other problems, lead should not be overlooked as a possible contributor.

Sources of Lead / Children at Risk

- ***Lead-based paint:*** Lead-based paint is one of the most common sources of lead exposure for children; paints manufactured since the late 1970s do not contain lead. Specific areas of concern in the home are window sills and doorways that are subject to surface abrasion due to opening and closing. Lead-based paint eventually chalks and flakes, creating leaded dust that falls on floors, toys, furniture and other areas in a child's environment. Ingestion occurs during normal, frequent hand-to-mouth activity and by inhalation of leaded dust. Children at risk for this type of exposure are those exhibiting symptoms of *pica* (an abnormal appetite for non-food substances), children living in deteriorated housing, and children living in older housing undergoing renovations (e.g. large amounts of lead may be released into the air by sandblasting).
- ***Soil:*** Soil may be lead-contaminated with deposits from gasoline, paint or other industrial or occupational sources. Lead is usually deposited in the top few inches of undisturbed soil and does not break down. Children at risk are those living in urban areas, particularly those near freeways and major street intersections, and those living near smelter areas and garbage incinerators where contaminated soil can be a major source of lead in house dust.
- ***Drinking water:*** Although drinking water is not typically the predominant source of lead poisoning in children, contamination usually occurs in the household plumbing system. Children living in houses with very old (lead) water pipes or in older homes undergoing lead pipe repairs are at risk for lead exposure.
- ***Food:*** The quantity of lead in the U.S. diet has decreased in recent years due to the restricted use of lead-soldered cans and decreased levels of lead in gasoline. Imported foods continue to

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■ School Entry Decisions... *from page 12*

- Meeting with the prospective kindergarten teacher to discuss how the school program would meet their child's individual needs and advanced skill level if the child entered at the regularly scheduled time.
- Exploring enrichment options available in the community during the year prior to regular entrance to kindergarten. ♦

Resources

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Shepard, L.A. & Smith, M.L. (1989). *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention*. New York: The Falmer Press.

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■ Lead Poisoning... *from page 13*

be stored in lead-soldered cans. Lead in food may also be a product of the environment in which the plant is grown (contaminated soil, water, or air). Contact with improperly manufactured leaded storage and usage items (ceramic ware, leaded crystal) may contribute to the lead content in food.

- ***Occupations and hobbies:*** Some occupations and hobbies may contribute to lead levels by transporting lead particles home on clothing or other materials. At-risk occupations include, but are not limited to, auto-repair, construction, firing range workers, workers in battery manufacturing plants, and workers in copper foundries. Some high risk hobbies include pottery, stained-glass activity, furniture refinishing and artistry using inorganic pigments.

What If I Suspect Lead Poisoning?

If you suspect your child has lead poisoning, he or she will need a medical evaluation. It's important to know that there are two types of blood tests — be sure to request the most rigorous test to be sure you obtain reliable results. Your doctor will provide proper medical treatment, depending on the level of lead indicated on the lab results. *Chelation therapy* is a medical treatment in which a lead-attracting agent is administered into the bloodstream to remove the lead for some lead poisoned children. Measures should be taken to protect your child from future exposure to lead, so an environmental investigation for sources of lead and its removal is also recommended. The guidelines in the table below are provided by the CDC with recommended actions for different levels of toxicity.

What Can I Do as a Parent to Prevent Lead Poisoning?

Lead-Based Paint, Soil, and Dust

- Keep young children away from paint chips, chewable surfaces painted with lead-based paints, or dust and soil contaminated with lead. If you are unsure about lead content in your home, your local health officials should be able to offer guidelines for lead detection and possible removal procedures.
- When remodeling your home, consider hiring professionals who are experienced in working with lead-based paint.
- Provide barriers between children and contaminated ground soil by planting grass, bushes or ground covers to surround your home. Particularly avoid exposed dirt.
- Perform weekly wet-washing with cleaning agents high in phosphate (e.g. Spic and Span) on hard surface floors, windows and window sills, doors and other surfaces accessible to children.
- Wash your child's hands, toys, pacifiers and bottle nipples frequently. Teach your children to wash hands frequently.

Water

- Use only fully-flushed water (run for 2 minutes) from your ***cold*** water tap for drinking, cooking or preparing infant formula. In homes with old plumbing, use bottled water.
- Arrange for a professional analysis of your home's water supply by an EPA-certified lab ($30 to $60).

Occupations & Hobbies

- Wash lead-exposed work clothes separately.
- Keep lead-contaminated scraps or waste away from your children.
- Keep all materials and supplies out of your child's reach.

Food

- Use a home lead detection kit to check ceramic ware or lead crystal.
- Imported food cans may be soldered with lead.
- Do not store food in opened cans.

Nutrition

- Provide your child with regular low-fat meals, since more lead is absorbed on an empty stomach. Food high in fat will retain lead longer in your child's system.
- Make sure your children have an adequate intake of iron, calcium, zinc and protein in their diet in order to increase resistance to lead absorption.

Medical Check Ups

- Every child should have a routine blood screening for lead since their exposure may change over time. The highest-risk children should be screened starting when they are 6 months old, since that is when blood lead levels begin to rise. Lower-risk children should be screened for the first time when they are 12-15 months old.

Pre-natal and Post-Natal Exposure to Lead

- Women of reproductive age should be screened for lead, since any lead in the mother's blood can cross the placenta and affect the developing fetus.
- Pregnant women should never be present during home renovations that involve lead-based paint stripping. ♦

Resources for Parents

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention: A Resource Directory, a free state-by-state guide to sources of assistance from the National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse. 703-821-8955, ext. 254.

The Dish Owner's Guide to Potential Lead Hazards, free from the Environmental Defense Fund, 5655 College Ave., Oakland, CA 9618. Send a business-size SASE.

EPA hot lines: 1-800-LEAD-FYI (for lead).

Thanks to Michael Wilson, school psychologist (Minneapolis Public Schools) for his review and suggestions for this handout.

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Appendix

Lead Levels, Symptoms and Recommendations

Lead Levels:	Possible Complications:	CDC Recommendations:
0-9 mcg/dl	No known problem.	Retest every 12 months to age six. Low risk for high dose exposure. No intervention necessary.
10-14	Risk for mild developmental delays, even if there are no obvious symptoms.	Retest every 6-12 months. Keep children from areas undergoing renovation or where there is likely to be a high concentration of lead dust. Use lead-free water for drinking and cooking.
15-19	No gross symptoms, but child at risk for mild learning problems.	Retest every 6-12 months. Test for iron deficiency. Consider environmental investigatioh and lead hazard abatement if simple changes do not reduce levels.
20-44	Usually no gross symptoms, but increased risk for intellectual impairment and hyperactivity. (1 child in 100 may have lead levels above 25.)	Complete medical evaluation and chelation treatment may be necessary. Treat for iron deficiency. Identify and eliminate environmental sources of lead.
45-69	Child may suffer from colic, anemia, hyperactivity, abdominal discomfort, constipation or poor concentration.	Medical treatment is required. Environmental assessment and remediation should begin as soon as possible.
70	Severe symptoms may include seizures, coma, mental retardation, and severe abdominal cramps.	IMMEDIATE in-patient medical treatment, environmental assessment and remediation.

The National Mental Health and Education Center For Children and Families
A public service program of the National Association of School Psychologists

www.naspweb.org/center.html

For information on a host of topics including school violence, social skills, discipline, retention, model programs, and resources for parents.

What is a School Psychologist?

School psychologists are found in every school system in the nation. Over 24,000 in number, they are highly trained in education, mental health, child development and learning theory. They are problem solvers who, working with others, assist in changing environments, attitudes and systems to help children use their strengths to succeed in academic learning, social skills and citizenship. School psychologists coordinate and evaluate needs unique to individuals with special learning and behavior problems. They promote the use of research-based psychology theory to assist in curriculum, instruction and school reform. This is carried out through team problem solving; consultation; staff, teacher and parent training; research and evaluation; direct interventions; assessment; referral and case management in collaboration with other pupil services professionals, such as school social workers, counselors and others.

About NASP

The National Association of School Psychologists represents over 20,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and in 25 foreign countries. Founded in 1969, it is the world's largest organization of school psychologists.

NASP serves its members and society by:

- Promoting the rights, welfare, education and mental health of children and youth; and
- Advancing the profession of school psychology.

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